

Talbot (J. T.)

"The Common Sense of Homœopathy."

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ANNUAL ADDRESS,

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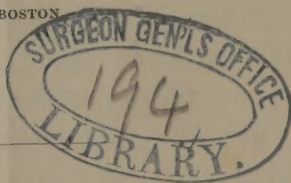
MASSACHUSETTS

HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL SOCIETY,

APRIL 10, 1861.

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OF BOSTON



BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON & SON,

5, WATER STREET.

1862.



## ANNUAL ADDRESS.

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THERE is an old and paradoxical saying, that “common sense is a rare sense;” and the history of medicine proves its truth among the followers of *Æsculapius*, known as *doctors*, or wise men, by whom absurd and opposite opinions have at different times been adopted and supported with unyielding tenacity, until these were supplanted by newer, and, if possible, still more absurd opinions. Thus the doctrine of peccant Humors, bequeathed by Galen, set the whole medical world at work to neutralize, or expel from the system, an imaginary agent existing in the blood, the character of which no one could understand or appreciate. This gave way to Solidism, which proclaimed that blood and the fluids of the body are of no account; that the solids only are endowed with vital properties; that they alone can receive the impression of morbid agents, and be the seat of pathological phenomena. Then came Vitalism; which denies that either the fluids or solids can be in a diseased condition, but that the vital principle controls every function of the organism, and

that it is only by deranging or impairing this vital principle that disease can exist. But Animism displaces all this by claiming a nobler origin for disease. "The soul," said the Animists, "is the immediate and intelligent agent of every movement, and of every material change in the body. All vital actions are, therefore, under its direction and control; and disease is nothing more than an effort of the soul, acting upon the vital power, to expel from the system any deranging cause."

These are a few of the many conflicting theories from time to time predominant: but, to those acquainted with the history of medicine, the terms Dogmatist; Theorist, or Rationalist; Empiric, or Experimentalist; Eclectic, Gymnast, Atomist, Methodist, Pneumatist, Chemist, or Mineralist; Botanist, Anatomist, Derivatist, Casual Indicist, or the high-sounding title, Iatro-mathematist,—all bring to mind sects, which, in their turn, have included the great mass of the medical profession, each of which has warred till its death against all opposing theories and notions. And from the varying opinions has resulted an equally varied medical treatment. At one time, it would seem to be the duty of the physician to change or modify the solid portions of the human body; at another, to withdraw every thing of a fluid character from the system. Now the doctor must expel Nature from the sick-chamber, and again select as his motto, *Natura duce*. For a long time, "leech" was a synonyme for physician; and it is a well-attested fact, that the lancet has shed more blood than the sword. Yesterday, the human body was made the grand receptacle for the most virulent and noxious poisons: to-day, "ex-



pectant" medicine declares that none of these poisons should enter the system to complicate and increase the disease.

Thus, for a time coeval with Christianity, has the healing art been drifting about in "the currents and counter-currents;" constantly seeking some beacon-light, some guiding-star, in the darkness, delusion, ignorance, and superstition by which it has been surrounded.

It was in the midst of all these conflicting theories and opinions, this darkness and superstition, that a new theory, known as Homœopathy, was advanced; which the whole profession united in denouncing as more absurd than any of the preceding ones. So utterly absurd did it appear, that a single shaft of ridicule would seem sufficient to annihilate it totally and for ever; and yet, notwithstanding the continued assaults of ridicule, denunciation, and misrepresentation, it has continued to increase in strength and importance, gaining friends and supporters on every side. Let us, then, in this brief hour, examine this pretended science, and see to what extent it is founded in truth and sustained by common sense.

And here I would premise, that I am not disposed to deny to past experience and effort in medicine its just meed of praise. It has accomplished much, and, in certain ways, all that could be desired. From profound ignorance, it has raised to a high state of perfection many of the subsidiary sciences, such as chemistry, anatomy, and pathology; while a reasonable success has been attained in some branches of therapeutics.

Thus, poisons taken into the stomach, and, to some extent, after they are absorbed by the tissues or carried into the circulation, may be neutralized and rendered inert by promptly administering chemical antidotes ; and substances which are producing irritation, mechanical or otherwise, in the stomach or alimentary canal, may be removed by well-known means. Some diseases, too, may be changed from a vital to a less important organ ; a fact which gave rise to the theory, that this was the extent of the medical art. These means, together with a few specifics for certain diseases, form the most important contributions which the various systems have made to the healing art.

In what respects, then, does homœopathy differ from the systems of medical practice which have preceded it ? I conceive these differences to be as follows : —

1st, Homœopathy takes for its guide in the treatment of disease a general principle, a law of nature ; while all other systems confess the entire absence of any controlling law.

2d, Homœopathy derives its knowledge of the effects of drugs upon the human system by experiments in health ; Allopathy, in sickness.

3d, Homœopathy uses its medicines pure and unmixed : Allopathy compounds them in ever-varying proportions.

4th, Homœopathy employs very small doses of medicine in disease : Allopathy depends upon comparatively massive doses.

There are still other differences ; but these are the principal ones ; which I propose to examine in detail.

## I. — THE PRINCIPLE.

Homœopathy is based upon a general principle in medicine, that all drugs possess the power of removing, from the human system, symptoms similar to those which they are capable of producing in it; and this principle, as expressed by the Latin aphorism *Similia similibus curantur*, is considered a great law of Nature for the control of disease. Is there any thing absurd or unreasonable in this? Nature performs all her offices in accordance only with fixed and immutable laws. Chance and uncertainty have nothing to do with her operations. The swinging lamp and the falling apple have given us glimpses of the unerring laws which control revolving worlds. The lightning's flash, the reverberating thunder, have each a controlling law. We cannot see, we cannot hear, but in accordance with the laws of light and sound; and existence itself requires compliance with certain laws of vitality. The human system is the highest development of Nature; and she, ever adapting means to ends, has carefully provided substances in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, and endowed them with the power of restoring the diseased system to its normal condition. Is it possible, then, that, in so important a matter as the action of these drugs upon disease, Nature has failed to establish any law; that chance directs in this department only, and that all here is doubt and uncertainty? This cannot be admitted for a moment. Is it, then, an absurdity to search for some controlling law in disease?

There has never been any great law of Nature revealed



to us, or any important fact discovered, but it had been foreshadowed more or less distinctly. Thus a belief in the regularity of the motion of the heavenly bodies had been frequently expressed before it was so clearly demonstrated by Galileo; and the attraction of gravitation, the circulation of the blood, steam and electricity applied to locomotion and communication, the anæsthetic power of ether, had all been vaguely hinted at long before they were clearly revealed by those master-minds whose names are so honorably connected with their discoveries. So, too, have been seen, from the time of Hippocrates, occasional glimpses of the great law which the genius of Hahnemann was first able to fully appreciate. For two thousand years, physicians had directed their efforts to the discovery of specifics for the different diseases of the organism; and with what result? With one or two exceptions, it was a total failure. Crossing and recrossing each other's paths in the bewildering maze of disease, one was sure to erase the footsteps another had made in the right direction. Was it reasonable, then, that a single person could succeed, where united effort had failed? As much so as that Theseus with his little thread could safely follow the dark and untrod labyrinthian ways.

This law, *similia similibus curantur*, became the guide to Hahnemann in his investigations, and it directed him to the specific curative power of drugs. The action of any drug upon the healthy human system revealed with certainty the symptoms for which that drug was a specific; and, thus guided, he discovered what the whole medical world had been in vain seeking.



In accordance with this law, medicines must be given for precisely such symptoms as they are capable of producing. Thus, in disease of the head, a medicine is required which affects the head, not the stomach; if the stomach is disordered, one acting on that organ, rather than on the skin. And the medicine must act, not in a general manner upon the organ, but upon that particular portion of it which is diseased. Thus it is useless to administer a medicine which affects only the mucous membrane of the stomach, when either the muscular coat, or nervous filaments of that organ, are the seat of disease. It must also have the power of producing an effect upon the organ, similar to the disease. Thus syncope may be occasioned alike by anemia or hyperemia; but, if by the former, it would be wholly useless to administer a medicine which produces plethora. Temperament, age, sex, disposition, temperature, and many other conditions, require to be taken into account by the physician; but they do not in the least change the character of the law.

If this be indeed a law of Nature for the curative action of drugs in disease, how much more of certainty will be gained by carefully understanding and conforming to it! While it would be easy to bring the authority of thousands in proof of the necessity for and absence of any fixed principle in the art of healing as it has been and to a great extent is now practised, I would quote the opinion of one of our most learned physicians and cautious observers, as expressed in a recently published lecture. He says of homœopathy, "No method of treatment could be more perfect in theory, or more

satisfactory in practice, if it were actually founded in truth." Another prominent and highly esteemed professor recently said in a lecture on homœopathy, "The truth of this question is one of observation alone." To this test, then, we may simply leave it; and though I may hereafter refer to the results of observation and experience, yet at this point we can all agree, that, in the principle on which homœopathy is based, there is nothing intrinsically absurd, or even improbable.

## II.—THE MANNER OF ASCERTAINING THE POWER OF DRUGS.

It would seem to be the most rational method possible, if we would learn the effect of any drug upon the human system, to administer it when that system is in its normal condition; otherwise it becomes impossible to discriminate the symptoms produced by the drug from those occasioned by the disease: and, even if we are satisfied that a certain symptom is produced or increased by the drug, we cannot know to what extent that symptom is changed or modified by the particular disease, or what would be the effect of the same drug in any other disease. Take, for example, that large class of drugs known as cathartics. How often, in disease,—colic, for example,—do we see different substances of this class administered one after another, beginning with the mildest and ending with the most drastic, without producing the usual effect, until at last the patient is left to *die*, because, forsooth, the medicines do not exert the same pathogenetic influence in one form of disease as in another, or as in health! So much difficulty attends a

single case, that it becomes obviously impossible to learn the effects of the different drugs in all the different diseases, to say nothing of the various grades and stages of each. The little positive knowledge which has been acquired by this method of investigation, pursued for twenty centuries, is exhibited in the fact, that scarcely a single medicine is administered now as it was in the last century; I might almost say, in the last decade.

There is still another view to be taken of this subject. This system of constant experimentation upon the *sick*, upon those who need the greatest care, and certainty in treatment, is at best a cruelty, however well-intentioned. Does any one deny that such a system is constantly practised? Take the whole numerical method so called, and see how, in hospitals, the same number of cases of any disease — croup for example — are treated respectively by venesection, leeches, blisters, emetics, cathartics, cauterization, and the expectant or rational method, for the purpose of ascertaining the comparative number of recoveries under each. Thus did Becquerel, for a whole year, treat his patients, in the Hospital of La Pitié, with electricity, to ascertain its effect in different diseases; and Andral, in his much-boasted experiments, administered one dose of some homœopathic medicine to each of his patients, for the express purpose of proving its inefficacy. Is it replied, that these experiments are only made in hospitals? If this were true (which it is not), how deep and lasting would be the disgrace, that, under the disguise of charity, poor unfortunate beings are induced to enter these institutions,



to become the subjects of experiments! God forbid that such noble institutions should ever be thus desecrated!

Compare this with the philanthropic, self-sacrificing spirit which animated the immortal Hahnemann, who, for a period of nearly forty years, constantly subjected his own body to the painful influence of the most virulent poisons, carefully recording all their effects for the benefit of succeeding generations; and then tell me which of these systems is supported by common sense, and still more by common humanity.

### III. — THE SIMPLE MEDICINES.

In regard to the indiscriminate mixing and compounding of drugs, there can be but a single opinion; since we know, that, the more complex the prescription, the more uncertain are we of obtaining the true effects of either single ingredient. I believe all systems of practice are gradually adopting the homœopathic method of administering but a single medicament at a time: and we look back with astonishment to those dark ages of medicine, when physicians relied for cure on such compounds as the all-powerful Theriaca of Andromachus, with its sixty-one ingredients, the most essential of which was the dried flesh of vipers; or when the Mithridate of royal renown, and equal complexity, held omnipotent sway over disease; or still later, when, according to the dispensatories of the day, there were mixed or jumbled together in a single dose as many as three hundred and eighty-eight different drugs and crude substances; from

many of which, regard for decency will not allow the concealment of a dead language to be removed. Common consent, then, has, to a great extent, settled upon the pure, unmixed form of medicine as the best; a fact which common sense and the slightest observation should have determined long ago.

#### IV. — THE DOSE.

There is a subject of great importance connected with the science of homœopathy, which the profound mind of Hahnemann could not clearly explain, and which the metaphysicians of our school have been entirely unable to understand. I refer to the curative action of the so-called infinitesimal dose of medicine. This has been the dark valley where many have halted and turned back in their investigations of homœopathy; and to this the shafts of ridicule have been most unceasingly directed. Earnest efforts have been made to solve this mystery; and vaccination has been often vauntingly quoted as proof positive that small doses can act upon the system. The odor of musk, and the power of inappreciable particles of *ippecacuanha* floating in the atmosphere, to produce dyspnœa, or even violent convulsions, have been often referred to. These are obvious and striking examples of the poisonous effects of these substances under certain conditions, and in very minute doses; but they are totally inapplicable as proofs of the *curative* action of drugs in similar doses.

The theory of Hahnemann, that the system cannot sustain two similar diseases at the same time (the strong-

er annihilating the weaker), is not sustained by fact; as in the occasional occurrence of measles and scarlatina at the same time, without either being extinguished by the other; the system only ridding itself of both diseases by a process of its own. Further than this, the doctrine of the greater potency of the medicinal disease is entirely hypothetical: nor does Rau's polarity or Attomyr's botanical character of disease add in the least to our knowledge of the method of cure; while the Hahnemann theory, modified by Schrön, Hufeland, Trink, and others, as well as the "derivative action" of Gerstel and the "substitutive method" of Trousseau, are equally unsatisfactory.

It is absurd to search for reasons for a fact, while the fact itself does not exist. Let us, then, first inquire whether it be indeed true, that the infinitesimal dose, so called in homœopathy, does exert any curative action in disease.

It is, to some extent, an unfortunate circumstance, that those ignorant of and prejudiced against any science or doctrine must obtain all correct knowledge of it from those best acquainted with it; but their prejudices go far to prevent them from accepting from such a source any facts or statements which may be opposed to their preconceived ideas: and yet the positive evidence of persons who have investigated and understand a subject will outweigh, a thousand times, the negative opinions or assertions of those unacquainted with it. I must, then, to some extent, in this matter, appeal to the opinions and experience of those best qualified to judge, — those who have made this a subject of study and observation.



Let me ask, gentlemen of this Society, if there is one among your whole number who has not seen a decided and marked curative effect from a minute dose of aconite in fever, ipecacuanha in vomiting, mercurius in diarrhœa, coffee in sleeplessness, belladonna and glonoine in headache, hepar sulphuris in croup, arnica in injuries, and chamomilla in many diseases of infancy. I know well that your answer will be, "Most assuredly we have;" and that answer would be unqualifiedly returned by the three thousand homœopathic physicians of the United States, as well as by the thousands of physicians belonging to our school in other parts of the world. Is there any one who would have the temerity to question this proof, or charge the authors of it with deception or duplicity from interested motives? Such audacity would surely prove its own destruction. But did any doubt still remain as to the curative power of the infinitesimal dose, I would appeal to the tens, yea, hundreds of thousands, who in the past half-century have taken these doses, and become so well convinced of their efficacy, that they unhesitatingly trust the lives of themselves and families to their influence in the most serious and dangerous diseases. Against this constantly increasing mass of evidence, negative opinions possess little value. Considering, therefore, this point established, so far as human evidence is possible, we may safely proceed to consider the character of this curative process.

The method by which Nature performs her most simple operations has been, and will probably ever continue to be, concealed from the human understanding. We

cannot tell why or how a seed germinates, a blade of grass grows, a stone falls to the ground, or the planets revolve in their orbits. That these are done, and done, too, in accordance with immutable laws, is all that we can know; and this is sufficient for our purposes. So, too, of the human organism. Chemistry and philosophy have done nothing to reveal its nature or the cause of its vitality; nor have all the researches of physicians, from Hippocrates to the present, ever discovered the how or why of the action of any drug or medicament upon it. But we do know that certain phenomena are produced by the action of these drugs upon the organism. Thus we see, that, if ipecacuanha is administered in doses of sufficient size, it excites emesis; that mercurius produces diarrhœa; that coffea causes sleeplessness; and so on with the whole catalogue of drugs. These we term the toxicological or pathogenetic effects of the drug; and each has its own peculiar pathogenesis, never ascertained *à priori*, but only discoverable by careful experiments.

Such experiments have been conducted for the last sixty years, and have revealed the fact, which is supported by the most indisputable proof, that drugs possess the power of removing as well as producing precisely similar symptoms in the organism: in other words, that there exists a twofold power in the action of every drug upon the human system,—the one a poisonous, destructive, deranging power; and the other a medicinal, curative, healing power.

Let us examine the subject from this stand-point, and see what we may learn of these powers, which we will call destructive and curative.

The *destructive* power is the quality which drugs possess of deranging, injuring, or poisoning the system ; and may very properly be termed pathogenetic, or disease-producing. It always requires, in order to produce this effect upon the organism, a quantity of the drug appreciable to the senses ; and this power, *cæteris paribus*, increases with the increase of quantity. It may also be increased or concentrated by removing from it the inert particles of matter with which it is often combined. Thus strychnine is obtained from nux vomica ; atropine, from belladonna, &c. It may be developed by division of the particles of a drug, as in mercury, iron, and nearly all metallic substances ; or by combining two or more substances, as in the carbonate of ammonia, bichloride of mercury, &c.

The *curative* power or the property of drugs to restore the diseased organism to a natural condition is more difficult to understand ; since, acting in the same direction, it is liable to be confounded with the unaided reparative process of Nature : but, from careful experiments, it would seem that this power exists in the drug, independent of quantity ; and is exhibited when the quantity is so diminished, that the destructive power begins to lose its influence. The precise point of diminished quantity, when the curative power reaches its most active or potent condition, is still undetermined ; but it is well established, that the quantity of the drug may be diminished to a very great extent, and yet retain this power. Thus we have all seen the curative influence of aconite, belladonna, and nux vomica, in the first, third, and sixth dilutions ; while many proofs are offered



of a similar power in the twelfth, thirtieth, or even two hundredth dilutions.

These powers are apparently directly opposed to each other: the symptoms which one will produce, the other will remove, and *vice versâ*; and we may always learn either power by carefully studying the other. Thus, if we observe accurately the sharp, griping, and cutting abdominal pains arising from the destructive power of colocynth, we shall know what the curative power of colocynth will remove.

This manner of discovering the powers of a drug would seem to be the direct and logical method; for while the discovery of any curative would indicate as well the destructive power of a drug, yet experiments among the confused mass of morbid symptoms, to find the limited curative power of each drug, would necessarily prove very tedious, as well as very uncertain, from the complex and ever-varying nature of these symptoms. On the other hand, the destructive power may be easily and correctly ascertained by its effect upon the healthy human system; and, when once discovered, it has given us, accurately and for ever, the twofold power of the drug.

Observation indicates that the destructive and curative powers of a drug do not always correspond in amount. Thus hydrocyanic acid, nicotin, and most of the alkaloids, which possess such intense destructive power, have thus far exhibited comparatively little curative influence; while coffee, arnica, and chamomilla, so often taken in large quantities with impunity, possess a very marked curative power. And a fact seemingly

still more striking is, that substances which have been considered inert, and which seem to possess but little destructive or poisonous property, have a very active curative power. Thus carbonate of lime, silex, charcoal, and common table-salt, possess a curative power, which those who only judge of the value of drugs by the amount of disturbance they are capable of producing have never imagined ; but which can be appreciated full well by those who, in the gravest forms of disease, have witnessed their sudden, direct, and powerful curative influence.

The precise manner in which this curative power is exerted, must, like all other operations of Nature, ever remain concealed. It is possible that there exists in the drug a direct power to remove the morbid symptoms ; but it would seem more probable, that this curative power is exhibited through some specific influence which it possesses, in assisting the re-acting power of Nature against disease, — the *vis medicatrix naturæ*.

By examining this theory of the twofold power of drugs, which seems to be consistent with facts, it will be seen, that, if it is true, ridicule is at once completely disarmed ; and the result which was treated as purely imaginary becomes the logical sequence of a power which we all know exists. It dispenses also with many of the doubtful assertions which have been made by homœopathists ; such as the necessity of medicinal aggravation when the proper remedy is administered, the dynamization of drug-force, &c. It also explains why homœopathic medicines, whose only influence is upon their own peculiar symptoms, become utterly

powerless if these are not present ; and why, in health, they may be taken with impunity.

What effect must these views have upon the science of homœopathy ? Relieved entirely from the mysticism, the doubt and uncertainty, which has so long enshrouded the action of its medicines, it is placed upon the broad plane of fact and rational observation.

While we would wish our opponents to lay aside their prejudices and disbelief, let us also relinquish all preconceived and consequently theoretical notions regarding the potency of the first, thirtieth, or two hundredth dilutions ; and, relying solely on observation and fact, let us seek to establish the conditions and relations of this curative power in each particular medicine. When this shall have been done with the same unceasing devotion which characterized the founder of our system ; when the curative power of each drug shall have been clearly and unmistakably defined, — then, indeed, shall our science have reached the acme of perfection, and we shall hear no more of the uncertainty of medicine.

Some of the advantages which homœopathy presents over other systems may be briefly alluded to ; and I trust they will be found such as common sense will approve.

1. *It is a more direct and certain system ;* its remedies being applied to the disease itself, rather than by attempting to reach it through other and healthy organs.

2. *Its relative success is greater.* Statistics show a less mortality under homœopathic treatment, as well as a greater rapidity in the cure of disease.

3. *It leaves no drug-disease in the system*, which often requires months, and even years, to eradicate; and, using no depleting measures, the strength of the patient is not reduced by treatment.

4. *Its medicines are easily administered*; a matter of no little importance with children, and in some forms of disease.

5. *It is safer*. Its medicines, if administered by mistake, do not possess the power of poisoning.

6. *It is able to treat new, and previously unknown, diseases without experiment*. Thus did Hahnemann, guided by symptoms which drugs had produced upon himself, point out the requisite treatment for cholera, before he had ever seen a case; and, in diphtheria, the success which has attended its treatment attests its value.

For these and other reasons, we believe that homœopathy presents a great advance in medical practice; and we earnestly desire that it should be carefully examined and understood by all. Let us consider how we may best accomplish this; and, in passing, glance at our position as one of the sects which are included in the oldest and most noted medical society of this State.

The Massachusetts Medical Society was incorporated for the express purpose of uniting, for professional advancement and interest, *all* the legally educated physicians of the State. To this body has been granted, from time to time, special privileges, to be enjoyed only by its members, who have been known as, *par excellence*, the physicians of Massachusetts. Recently, a



by-law has been adopted by the Society, proscribing from membership all physicians, however well qualified otherwise, who believe that cures can be effected in accordance with the principles of homœopathy. Now, I will not stop to inquire whether it was the intention of those who incorporated the Medical Society of Massachusetts to give its members power to exclude therefrom well-qualified physicians for mere opinion's sake ; or whether this attempt to stop earnest inquiry, by placing under a ban all who, after a careful investigation, have adopted opinions different from a majority of its members on some medical subjects, will redound to the credit of the Massachusetts Medical Society, or the advancement of medical science. But, as one of its members, I must object to the manner in which this act was accomplished. By the conditions of the charter, the State allowed all physicians, graduated at legally established colleges within its limits, to become members, without regard to any particular tenets or opinions held by them. At the last session of the Legislature, a successful effort was made to so revise the charter as to allow the Society to elect its members without restriction ; at the same time representing that this was not designed to affect any class of physicians, or to interfere with the opinions of any one, but simply to exclude from membership any persons of immoral character. After the Society had accepted the amended charter, the following by-law was adopted :—

“ No person shall hereafter be admitted a member of the Society, who professes to cure diseases by Spiritualism, Homœopathy, or Thompsonianism.”

This was one of the first acts of the Society under the amended charter ; done, not at the full meeting of a society consisting of nearly a thousand fellows, but at an adjourned meeting, with but *nineteen persons* present : and even here, lest, as once before, they might fail if they attacked homœopathy on its own merits, they sought to divert attention by placing it between and covering it with the odium almost universally attached to “Spiritualism” and “Thompsonianism ;” both of which have passed, or are rapidly passing, to their place, with “kindred medical delusions.”

But it may be asked, Why did not the homœopathic members of the Society actively oppose the adoption of such a by-law ? I think I am fully justified in the assertion, that of the sixty or more members who have adopted homœopathic practice, not one was apprised of this proposed by-law ; in fact, that it was carefully concealed from them : for, while changes in the by-laws are usually published beforehand for the members to examine, I have reason to believe that this proposition was never divulged to the Society until it fell from the lips of the Secretary at the select meeting by which it was adopted. Of these homœopathic members, I may safely assert, that there is scarcely one who has not carefully conformed to all the rules and regulations of the Society, and sought to increase its influence and elevate its standing. Never have they introduced subjects which would produce discord or lead to acrimonious discussion : nor have they sought, in any manner, to obtrude their own favorite doctrines upon the Society ; but for more than twenty years, with gradually increas-

ing numbers, they have been faithful members of the Society and profession ; earnestly searching for every improvement in the art of medicine, and quietly obtaining, in the daily round of practice,—that sphere of the true usefulness of a physician,—new confirmation of the truth of the great law of cure. By facts and proofs, rather than theory, they have sought to gain the attention and confidence of their brethren ; and this has slowly but steadily been given.

In the minds of some members of the profession, bitter prejudices and uncharitable feelings have been aroused ; but, unless I greatly err, the majority are just and liberal in their sentiments : and I doubt not, were the subject brought before a full meeting of the Society, this obnoxious by-law would be as promptly repealed as it was insidiously adopted.

It has been sometimes said, that it is strange we are willing to remain members of a society holding such diverse opinions. It is because such different opinions are entertained, because it embraces the various medical views and tenets, and because it includes the *medical profession*, that we, so long as we remain members of that noblest profession, wish also to retain our position in such a society. But change its character ; narrow its limits ; make it, if you please, a sectarian society, like our own, and call it the Allopathic Medical Society,—and it will soon be seen who of our number would continue their fellowship.

And now, gentlemen, what duties and responsibilities rest upon us in our relation to our profession, to ourselves, and to those around us ! Our science, though



now too old to be considered a novelty, is yet too young to have reached perfection; and it is our duty, day by day, to do every thing in our power for its advancement. And perhaps in no way can we do this better than by making provings and reprovings of drugs upon ourselves; thus improving and completing our *materia medica*.

Our numbers are rapidly increasing. Twenty-three years ago, there was but one homœopathic physician in New England. In 1857, a tolerably exact directory contained the names of a hundred and twenty in Massachusetts alone. Since that time, I have received the additional names of ninety-two physicians in this State who have adopted our principles and practice. This, with changes and deaths in the original number, makes the increase about *sixty per cent in four years*. The proportional increase is much greater among medical students; many of whom, from the well-known prejudices of their professors, do not, while students, express their opinions on this subject. The number of patients under homœopathic treatment was never so great as at present; and the number, both of physicians and patients, will continue to increase, and the blessings of homœopathy to extend, if we are but faithful to our duty.

Let us understand and fully appreciate the importance of our position. If this principle of *similia* is indeed a universal law of Nature, then do we occupy the true scientific ground in medicine. No longer drifting among diverse and conflicting opinions, where hazardous experiments may occasionally prove a



brilliant success, we hold a position where the greatest exactness is required in the practical application of the law. How imperative is it, then, to bring to our aid a well-balanced mind, fully inducted in all the subsidiary branches of medicine; a correct judgment, which properly applies the law in all its bearings; an acute and far-seeing perception; earnestness, devotion, and love for our profession; and, above all, strict honesty and integrity of character; never exaggerating our cures, or claiming too much for our science! Thus, firmly planted on this rock of Truth, we may safely wait; and, secure against all the assaults of ridicule, invective, and misrepresentation, rest assured of the ultimate universal adoption of our principles.